

FAMILY HANDBOOK

St. Stephen Middle School 2025-26

OUR MISSION

OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITIES
CHALLENGE. ENCOURAGE. ACHIEVE.

OUR VISION

SSMS COMMITS TO PROVIDING DIVERSE LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES TO FOSTER PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS.

Our Values & Beliefs

At SSMS, we are guided by the core values of respect, responsibility, and inclusion, which shape our learning environment and school community.

Hello Families of St. Stephen Middle School,

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to another exciting school year at SSMS! We look forward to working together to provide a safe, supportive, and academically engaging environment where every student can thrive.

A Few Highlights for the Start of the Year:

- **Daily Routine:** Students will begin each day in their homeroom class before rotating through their other subjects, which are typically located on the same grade-level floor.
- **Lockers:** Lockers will be assigned and locks provided by the school.
- **Lunch:** Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria.

School Access and Security:

For everyone's safety, all entrances will remain locked during the school day. You are welcome to ring the doorbell at the main entrance on School Street and our Administrative Assistant will be able to help within the hours of 8:00am – 12:30pm and 1:15pm – 3:30pm. Please feel free to call the main office for more information (506) 466-7311.

Staying Connected:

We deeply value communication and collaboration with our families. Here's how we'll keep you informed:

- Every **Sunday**, families will receive a weekly calendar via email outlining key events for the week ahead.
- Each **term** an **SSMS Sway** will be sent out, highlighting events from school with pictures and notes from the staff to help capture the fun!

Family Involvement:

We are fortunate to have a dedicated **Parent School Support Committee**. Their partnership is invaluable to our school community. Keep an eye out for announcements about upcoming meetings and how you can get involved.

Curriculum and Support:

You'll find links to the New Brunswick curriculum in this handbook. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teacher—we're here to help and believe strongly in working together to support your child's learning.

As we begin the 2025–2026 school year, we know there will be questions, and we encourage you to reach out anytime. This handbook is designed to be a helpful resource, and we hope it supports a smooth start to the year.

The entire SSMS team is committed to making this school year meaningful, inclusive, and full of growth. We are excited to embark on this journey with you.

Warm regards,
The SSMS Team

St. Stephen Middle School Staff

Below is the staff list for St. Stephen Middle School. For any classroom-related concerns, please contact the classroom teacher directly as the first point of communication. Should further support be needed, school administration is always available to assist.

Staff email addresses follow the format: **firstname.lastname@nbed.nb.ca** (e.g., **wesley.french@nbed.nb.ca**).

Administration	Administrative Assistant	Maintenance
Wes French (Principal) Kara Matheson (Vice Principal)	Susan MacDonald	Steve Christie
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Ann Dempsey Carlos Gomez Josh Cheney Karen Hutchison Krista McGinn	Emma Hemphill Hanan El Bakali Mark Lyons Robin Heelis	Avis Scott Beth Stinson Erin Breen-Harris Katie Bishop Monica Gillmor (Homeroom) Temp Music (Homeroom)
Art/Music/Tech/Wellness	Physical Education	French Language Assistant
Joel Hooper (Art) Temp Music Kris Good (Tech) Brienne Washburn (Wellness)	Jennifer Heelis Monica Gillmor	Irene Pommier
Education Support Services	Educational Assistants	Custodial Team
Emily Fawkes (Guidance) Brittany Gowan-Noble (Resource) Megan Nozzolillo (Resource) Chloe Ste. Marie-McIntyre (BIM)	Krista Cook Mark Fraser Terry Hovey Shanna Johnson Susan Johnston Michelle Lacey Ellen Smith	Freda Copeland (CII) Bernie Sewell Felipe Galang
Academic Support Teacher		
Melissa Whalen		



If Conflict Arises:

**Reaching Resolutions
when conflict occurs**

**A safe, pleasant, and productive
learning and working environment for all**



Revised 07-2010



Introduction

Millions of interactions occur each year in our school system. Parents/guardians, teachers, students and others communicate with each other, cooperatively make decisions, and generally strive to improve the service to students. The information outlined in this brochure is intended to help foster a strong, positive working relationship between parents/guardians and teachers.

What are my rights and responsibilities as a parent/guardian? *Source: NB Education Act*

(13)1 In **support** of the learning **success** of his or her child and the learning environment at the school, a parent is expected to

- (a) **encourage** his or her child to attend to assigned homework,
- (b) **communicate reasonably** with school personnel employed at the school his or her child attends as required in the best interest of the child,
- (c) cause his or her child to **attend school** as required by this Act,
- (d) ensure the basic needs of his or her child are met, and
- (e) have due care for the conduct of his or her child at school and while on the way to and from school.

(13)2 The parent of a pupil has a **right to reasonable consultation with the pupil's teacher or the principal** of the school the pupil attends with respect to the education of the pupil.

(13)3 It is the responsibility of the **parent of a pupil** and of **school personnel** to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and to follow **established procedures** when involved in communications concerning the pupil.

How Can Parents/Guardians Assist in Fostering a Positive Learning and Working Environment?

- **Show support** for the school by volunteering or attending school functions, participation in Home and School, Parent School Support Committee (PSSC) or the District Education Council (DEC).
- **Show interest** and **concern** in your child's efforts and achievements.
- **Encourage** and **Expect** positive learning experiences by providing a quiet area to study, and a consistent opportunity or schedule for school responsibilities.
- **Refrain** from making negative comments (either verbally or electronically) about schools and teachers in the presence of students, or for that matter, in the presence of other adults.

If Disagreement Occurs

It is possible in any system, like education, involving hundreds of thousands of interactions daily, that some of these contacts will lead to misunderstandings or disagreements. When a misunderstanding or disagreement occurs between the school system and a parent/guardian, it is essential for the well-being of all concerned, especially the student involved, that the adults reach a resolution as quickly and reasonably as possible. Since it is possible for either party to feel offended in these disputes, both must feel comfortable that they have a process to bring the dispute to resolution. The end result must always be a supportive and positive learning environment for all in the classroom.

What is the Process to Follow to Resolve a Question, Concern or Complaint?

Source: Policy 703: Positive Learning and Working Environment

If a conflict arises between parents/guardians and school personnel the following process should be used to resolve the issue:

- **Talk** or meet with the person directly involved. If either party is uncomfortable with this approach, request involvement from school administration and/or appropriate district office personnel.
- **Discuss** the issue using plain language. The goal of the discussion is to **problem-solve** together to find resolution.
- If there is no satisfactory resolution resulting from the discussion, the next step is to meet with school administration (if not already involved).
- If resolution is not achieved at the school level, the next step is to meet with district office personnel (if not already involved) with the **last resort** for resolving conflict being a meeting with the Superintendent.

Other Considerations

- In some situations, the teacher and/or school administrator involved may wish to **communicate with the NBTA/NBTF** to seek advice and guidance in the matter.
- The strength of the school system and its impact on students is greatest when influences at home and at school work in harmony to achieve the results for students.
- In rare occasions, the conflict may require other interventions such as initiating procedures under the New Brunswick Trespass Act, calling police for their assistance, or launching a civil suit.



How Should Parents/Guardians Arrange a School Meeting?

School personnel welcome planned visits from parents/guardians. The following guidelines should be followed when parents/guardians wish to arrange a school meeting:

- As in any professional workplace, it is expected that parents/guardians will arrange an appointment in advance of a meeting.
- Parents/guardians wishing to visit a classroom must contact the principal and teacher involved for further information about arranging the visit.

Department of Education's Policy 703: Positive Learning and Working Environment

School personnel and students have the **right to work and learn** in an environment that is safe, productive and harassment free. As **partners in education**, we all share an interest in teaching and modelling positive behaviour.

- *Every person is valued and treated with respect.*
- *Students have a sense of belonging and connection, feel they are supported by school personnel, and have a positive relationship with at least one adult in the school system.*
- *Parents, school personnel, district staff and the school community understand that social skills, self-discipline, empathy, compassion and ethics are learned throughout life.*

For more information on this policy, please visit the Department of Education's website: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/policies.asp> (scroll down to Policy 703 and its appendices).

Conclusion

The purpose of the school system is to provide students with a learning environment in which each can succeed without unnecessary disruption. Parents/guardians and teachers must work together to create this learning environment for students.

Your child, our student

will gain maximum benefit if we can find ways to ensure the relationship between home and school is positive. It is important, therefore, that both the influences at home and the communication at school encourage a **positive attitude** in the student toward school, fellow students, and school personnel.

SSMS Curriculum

The New Brunswick curriculum embraces a holistic approach, designed to support the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of each student. This well-rounded framework encourages critical thinking, creativity, and personal growth, preparing students for success in all areas of life. To learn more about the curriculum and its components, please visit the link: [NB Curriculum](#).

SSMS PBIS

At St. Stephen Middle School we are a PBIS school, and you will probably hear lots about this from your child. PBIS stands for Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports, and it is a system whereby students are given the opportunity to learn and practice our commonly agreed upon schoolwide expectations. Students are positively reinforced for mastering the expectations and demonstrating the positive behaviours.



Prepared
Responsible
Ownership
Wellness
Leadership

SSMS Behaviour Consequences for “Behaviours Not Tolerated”

These behaviours present a challenge to the positive learning and working environment at school.

Behaviours Not Tolerated	Consequences
Defiance/Disrespect Loitering* Disorderly Conduct Persistent/Repetitive Disruptive Behaviour	1st Offense Warning from Principal or Vice Principal
	2nd Offense Student Meeting with Principal or Vice Principal and Detention
	3rd Offense Student Meeting with Principal or Vice Principal, One Day Out of School Suspension
	4th Offense Student Meeting with Principal or Vice Principal, Three Days Out of School Suspension
	5th Offense Five Days Out of School Suspension
	Beyond 5 Offences: Students will be assigned to home until a meeting can be held with the family.

* Loitering is defined as remaining in an area for no obvious reason. At school, students may be loitering when they are in the bathroom for a long period of time but not using the bathroom. Another example would be if they were in the hallway without a valid reason. Valid reasons would be walking to and from the bathroom, office or another location with a hall pass.

SSMS Behaviour Consequences for “Serious Misconduct”

These behaviours represent a significant disruption to the learning and working environment, endanger others or significantly impair the operation of the school and the maintenance of a positive learning and working environment.

Serious Misconduct	Consequences
Bullying, Hazing or Intimidation	The severity of the incident may result in a higher-level consequence being issued.
Possession of Weapon(s)	<p>1st Offense</p> <p>One Day Out of School Suspension</p>
Possession, use or sale of illegal or dangerous substances or objects (eg. Vapes, Illegal Drugs, Tobacco, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and possession of explosives)	<p>2nd Offense</p> <p>Three Day Out of School Suspension with a Short Term Intervention Plan or Behaviour Contract Developed</p>
Physical Violence	
Uttering Threats	
Vandalism causing damage	
Theft	
Disruption of School Operations	
Hate Propaganda	
	<p>3rd Offense</p> <p>Five Day Out of School Suspension, Meeting with Parent(s)/Guardian(s) before returning to school and Intervention Plan Updated.</p>
	<p>Other Possible Interventions/Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent Risk Threat Assessment • Common Case Plan *Family, School and other Agencies planning together) • Case Conference (Family and School Planning together)

SSMS Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones and personal electronic devices (gaming systems, iPads, Smart Watches, etc) can be a major distraction in the learning environment, leading to reduced focus, increased social pressures, and potential misuse such as cyberbullying or unauthorized recording. At the middle school level, students are still developing self-regulation skills, and constant access to phones can interfere with their ability to engage fully in class and build healthy social relationships. Our school's policy to reduce cell phone use is designed to create a safer, more focused, and respectful learning environment where students can thrive academically and socially without unnecessary distractions.

Keeping in line with other middle schools across the district (Beaconsfield, Bayside, Barnhill, and Forest Hills) our policy is as follows:

Specific Actions:

If a student is found using or seen with an electronic device at school, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) The device will be delivered to the office by the student.
- 2) In the office, the device will be logged in and kept in a secure location. It will be picked up by the student at the end of the day.
- 3) Caregivers will be notified.

After repeat offences, caregivers will be asked to pick up confiscated devices at the office which will be open until 4pm.

If a student is using a personal electronic device, the following procedure will be followed:

1st Occurrence: Caregivers will be called, and the student will pick up the phone at the office at the end of the day.

2nd Occurrence: Caregivers will be called. They will be responsible for picking up the device at the office by 4pm.

3rd Occurrence: Caregivers will be called and will be responsible for picking up the device and an incident report will be entered in PowerSchool.

4th Occurrence: Caregivers will be contacted by Administration and will be responsible for picking up the device. Student will receive a one-day suspension.

Bell Schedule

2025-2026



7:55-8:10 am

Drop off with doors opening at 8:10am

8:20-8:35 am

Homeroom

8:35-9:35 am

Block 1

9:35-10:35 am

Block 2

10:35-10:50 am

Break

10:50-11:50 am

Block 3

11:50 am- 12:30pm

Lunch/Recess

12:35-1:35 pm

Block 4

1:35-2:35 pm

Block 5

****Please note the office will be closed to the public between 12:30 and 1:15pm. The phone will not be answered at this time.**

SSMS Communication, Bus Planner and Inclement Weather Days

As we prepare for the school year, please take a moment to review the following important reminders:

- **Bus Plans:** Please check [BusPlanner](#) regularly for up-to-date information on student transportation.
- **Inclement Weather:** In case of bad weather, updates will be posted on the [Anglophone South School District](#) website and shared through local radio stations.
- **Important Notices:** We use School Messenger for school-wide announcements. To ensure you receive these messages, please make sure your email address and contact numbers are current with the school office.
- **Sign In/Sign Out:** When students arrive outside regular arrival times, they must report to the main office to sign in. To ensure student safety **parents/guardians are required to sign students out at the office window.**

Thank you for helping us keep everyone informed and safe!

SSMS Technology Supports for Families



Every student in New Brunswick can install Microsoft 365 for free, which includes applications such as Microsoft Teams which will be the primary software NB Teachers will use. Instructions for downloading can be found at: [How to download Microsoft Office](#)



For information on Microsoft Teams please link to: [Microsoft Teams info](#)



[Internet Safety](#)

SSMS School Absences

Consistent school attendance is key to student success academically, socially, and emotionally. When students are present and engaged each day, they build strong routines, relationships, and learning habits.

If your child will be absent, please report it through [School Messenger](#) to help us keep accurate records and ensure student safety.

Thank you for your support in making daily attendance a priority!

SSMS School Cash Online & Cafeteria

St Stephen Middle School continues to offer [School Cash Online](#) as the preferred method of payment for most school fees including student fees. We kindly ask all families to ensure school fees are paid, as these funds directly support special events, activities, and enriching opportunities that all students look forward to and enjoy.

We're happy to provide a cafeteria service offering a variety of daily meal options. Families can conveniently view menus, choose meals, and make payments online through [Nutrislice](#). This easy-to-use system helps streamline lunch and saves time for both students and staff!

SSMS Physical Education and Athletics

At SSMS, we value physical activity as a vital part of student health and well-being. Students participate in PE classes each week, with a focus on participation, personal skill development, cooperation, and teamwork.

We're fortunate to have two gyms and outdoor spaces, including occasional use of Legion Field. Students must come prepared with proper PE clothing. If forgotten, clean loaner clothing will be available.

Students must have a separate pair of indoor sneakers. Outdoor shoes or non-sneakers are not permitted. Outdoor PE also requires suitable footwear.

Adolescence is a time of growth, and good hygiene supports self-esteem. Students are encouraged to bring unscented deodorant, in line with our scent-reduced policy.

Athletics

We are pleased to offer a variety of extracurricular sports activities throughout the school year such as:

- Fall: Cross-country, Soccer
- Winter: Basketball, Wrestling, Badminton
- Spring: Volleyball, Track & Field, Flag Football, Softball and Baseball

At the beginning of each season, information will be shared with families about try-outs. Once the teams have been organized, a family meeting with the coach will be held to outline the practice schedule, fees (including the team budget), communication, and travel expectations.

